PHOTO COURTESY OF REA RAIHALA CHRISTOFFERSSON

MARIA KUSTAAVA ALAJOKI RAIHALA, "GANGA", CA. 1960. SEE PAGE 33.

In This Issue ...

This issue begins with Jerry Sutherland's continuing story of Calvin Tibbets, the man he proposes as Oregon's first pioneer. Though he did not live long, Calvin Tibbets took part at many of the most important events in the early history of Oregon. Jerry Sutherland has now brought him out from obscurity into the pantheon of Oregon's pioneers.

Not many high school students would trade a season of playing football for work on a sailing ship to Australia, but 17 year-old Curtis Dyer worked on the barkentine *Thistle* from the end of June until late in the fall. His letters to his mother were meant to amuse her and to reassure her that he was surviving what was sometimes an uncomfortable experience.

Rea Raihala Christofferson has written three books that are in the CCHS Collection: *The Raihala Family Cookbook, The Oja Family Cookbook* and *Finnish Roots and American Branches.* She has now written a story for *Cumtux* about her paternal Raihala grandparents and their immigration to Brownsmead.

Another issue will also soon be appearing.

—The Editor

CLATSOP COUNTY
HISTORICAL SOCIETY
714 Exchange St.
P.O. Box 88
Astoria, Oregon 97103-0088
(503) 325-2203
cchs@cumtux.org
www.cumtux.org

Heritage Museum
16th and Exchange St., Astoria

Flavel House Museum
8th and Duane St., Astoria

Oregon Film Museum
7th and Duane St., Astoria

Uppertown Firefighters Museum
30th and Marine Drive, Astoria

BOARD OF DIRECTORS
Andrew Bornstein, Astoria
President
Kent Easom, Astoria
Vice-President
Patricia Roberts, Gearhart
Secretary
Kent Ivanoff, Astoria
Treasurer
Krista Bingham, Warrenton
Margarite Chopping, Astoria
Jeff Daly, Astoria
Brett Estes, Astoria
Cheri Folk, Warrenton
Paul Mitchell, Warrenton
J. Todd Scott, Seattle
David Reid, Astoria
Randy Stemper, Astoria

STAFF
McAndrew Burns
Executive Director

Sam Rascoe
Director of Marketing

Liisa Penner
Archivist &
CUMTUX *Editor*

Amber Glen
Curator

Martha Dahl
Business Manager

Carol Lambert
Sheila Nolan
Marlene Taylor
Michael Wentworth
Cumtux Support

CUMTUX

CLATSOP COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY
QUARTERLY
Vol. 35, No. 1 — Winter 2015
Copyright © 2015 Clatsop County Historical Society
(ISSN 1083-9216)

Contents:

2 **Calvin Tibbets: Oregon's First Pioneer**
Part 2 of 2
By Jerry Sutherland

18 **An Adventure on a Five-Masted Barkentine**
By Curtis Pelton Dyer

33 **The Saga of Pampa and Ganga**
By Rea Raihala Christoffersson

24 **Centerfold: Lewis and Clark 8th grade class in 1941.**
By Robert Kearney

42 **Jailed Reporter Tells Of Slusher Hotel Life**
By Dave Young Ex-news editor of Morning Astorian

46 **City Police & Sheriff in Squabble**

49 **A Puzzle from the Daily Astorian February 5, 1882**

Front Cover: Curtis Pelton Dyer, courtesy of Adrian Dyer. Curtis traded a season of football for an adventure on a five-masted barkentine

CUMTUX: Chinook jargon:
"To know... to inform"

I am raring to get back. To have a good read, fondle the good old dictionary, play basketball, dance, get a good bath and into clean clothes to go out to a party – or dance, study French, Geom II or anything. And do you really have white things on the table to eat from, sheets or something like that? and silver implements? Oh my! I have only had a few drinks. Being limited I have only had a beer, Burgundy, and some invalid port. I don't like the taste.

October 7 – Newcastle, Australia

The coal is loaded and we are getting things fixed up for sea. The old man has gone to Sydney, I suppose to settle matters. We expect to sail about the first of the week. I have been ashore about every night here. There is nothing to do in Newcastle but I go over to Stockton across the river to the mission. They hold socials, musicals, etc. and I sit around, play games.

I stayed aboard tonight to wash some clothes and do some writing. All the organized bunch paid off but Red and I. The mate also. We have a new mate on board.

October 9 – Newcastle, Australia

A quiet Sunday aboard, just waiting to go over to the mission to have some tea, go to chapel and knock around talking to the girls. The trip home will be all right til we get past the Hawaiian Isles then the cold.

Perhaps about the first of the year or in Feb. the old scow will come gliding out of the mists and foul weather into the old Columbia. Love to Dabby, Aunty Ida and to you.

P.S. Hope there is a load of wood waiting to be put in when I get there.

C.

Following his return from the sea, Curtis attended Reed College in Portland, followed by another voyage aboard the *Alice Cook* that took him to Hawaii where he jumped ship and lived for a time before returning to Oregon. His studies took him into commercial art. He married Frances Adrian in 1942 in San Francisco where they settled down. Curtis entered the Navy in 1943 and saw action at Okinawa serving aboard the *USS Garrard* (APA-84), a Gilliam-class attack transport, offloading men and cargo of the 854th Aviation Engineers off Hagushi Beach. Upon returning home he became a commercial artist.

Adrian Melville Dyer, the son of Curtis Pelton Dyer now lives in Aumsville, Oregon.

The Saga of Pampa and Ganga

How Matt and Mary Räihälä Emigrated from Kalajoki, Finland to Brownsmead, Oregon

By Rea Raihala Christoffersson

Matti Alfred Räihälä (1878-1950) left Kalajoki, Finland in 1902 at the height of Finnish emigration to the U.S. He traveled through Canada, and arrived in Brownsmead, Oregon in 1903. Later that year, he was joined by his wife, Maria Kustaava Alajoki Räihälä (1878-1967), and their little daughter, Ellen. Matti and Maria were my paternal grandparents.

It was common for immigrants to change their names after they reached their new home, so Matti became Matt and Maria became Mary. They also dropped the "umlauts" [ä] from their last name. In the 1920s, however, they underwent another important name change. Their eldest grandchild, Frank "Bub" Frost, was trying to say "grandpa" and "grandma," but the words came out "Pampa" and "Ganga." These nicknames stuck, and almost a century later, they are still used by six generations of Matt's and Mary's descendants.

Räihälä is not a common Finnish name, and everyone who has it had an ancestor who once lived a single large farm in Kalajoki. The earliest Räihälä ancestors we have discovered in our line of descent are:

Matti Juhonpoika Räihälä (ca. 1660-1745)

Matts Mattss Räihälä (1713-1792)

Matti Mattss Räihälä (1742-1803)

Matti Mattias Räihälä (1802-1865).

These men all seemed to have lived on or near the family farm their whole lives. We know they married and had descendants, but don't have many details about their lives.

Pampa's father, also called Matt Raihala (1838-1908) was next in this long line of Matt Raihalas. He had come to the U.S. in 1897. Amanda, his second wife and Pampa's mother, followed him a short time later. According to family lore, Amanda had said emphatically that, "she was not going to be one of those American widows." She was referring to the scenario in which a struggling Finnish farmer departed for America, leaving his family behind, never to be heard from again.

IMAGE COURTESY OF THE AUTHOR.

MARY "GANGA", ELLEN, RENO, AND MATT "PAMPA" RAIHALA IN 1904.

Ganga was born on a beautiful farm called "Alajoki" near Rahja, Finland, a small coastal port village just south of Kalajoki. The central farm buildings were built on a hill, and a small river flowed through a field below the farmhouse. This river used to be called the Alajoki (Lower River), but the name has now been changed to the Himanka River. The farm had already been in the family almost 200 years when Ganga lived there, and is still owned by the Alajoki family.

Ganga's home at Alajoki was only about eight miles from Matt Alfred Raihala's (Pampa) boyhood home. We don't know how she met Pampa, but they were almost certain to marry someone who lived nearby. In the Kalajoki region, snow covers the ground for almost half the year, and at that time, a farm horse was the best transportation available to most young people, so traveling to Helsinki to find a mate was out of the question.

Pampa was a compact, handsome man with a shock of dark hair, flashing dark eyes and a luxuriant moustache. Ganga had the fair good looks that have been in the Alajoki family for generations. She was petite with a delicate, oval face and prominent cheekbones. At some point in their early twenties, these two met and fell in love.

The Alajokis—especially Ganga's mother, Karoliina— were not pleased. Karoliina was born a Siipola, which was one of the most prominent families in the Kalajoki region. They were very respectable landholders. Pampa, on the other hand, didn't own any farmland—his father had sold his portion of the Raihala farm when Matti was just two years old, and when his kids were grown, he headed to America.

According to members of the Alajoki family who still live in Finland, the Raihala family also had other strikes against them. They lived a bohemian lifestyle, had leftist political opinions, and Matti was a bit too fond of alcohol.

But Ganga was in love and found the courage to stand up to her imperious mother, so the couple were married in December, 1901. They were both 23 years old. The wedding was probably not a lavish, formal affair because the Alajokis adamantly opposed it. After it happened, Karoliina promptly told Ganga she was no longer welcome at the Alajoki farm.

In defiance, Pampa and Ganga immediately started a family. Pampa left for America leaving Ganga in Finland to give birth to her first child who she named Ellen. Ganga had the help of a paternal aunt who was a midwife. It's possible that Ellen was born in a sauna, the traditional delivery room of the time. Saunas had the advantage of being both clean and warm.

Early in 1903, Pampa sent for Ganga and Ellen to join him in his new home in Oregon. They arrived at Ellis Island on the St. Louis in September of that

year and traveled across North America to join Pampa in Brownsmead.

In July 1904, nine months after Pampa and Ganga were reunited, Ellen had a baby brother named Reno. Four more children followed: Willie (1905); Sylvia, known as Shrimp (1907); Irene, known as Ikie (1910); and Wilma (1918).

Pampa may not have been the Alajokis' idea of a perfect son-in-law, but Sari Alajoki, Mary's great grandniece who still lives in Finland, reports that Ganga never had a bad word to say about him. Although the family was not well-to-do, their kids had a healthy, active, rural childhood, and were diligently sent to school, at least up through the eighth grade.

Although Pampa had only a basic education himself, he was clearly very intelligent and a hard worker. He turned his hand to at least seven different occupations to feed his growing family: miner, logger, fisherman, farmer, landlord, proprietor of a general store, and the owner of two launches that brought supplies from Astoria to logging camps on Blind Slough and its tributaries.

When they were just young teenagers, Pampa's two boys, Reno and Willie, would run the launches to Astoria to get supplies for the Larkin Green logging operation—or "show" as it was called—located near the upper reaches of Gnat Creek. The launches had old one-lung gas motors with big flywheels. Reno said it took both boys to spin the flywheel and get the engine started.

Pampa's general store was near the existing Blind Slough railroad bridge, and the two launches were moored nearby. Ray Raihala, Reno's son, remembers that the launches were named Orpo (Orphan) and Veikko (a Finnish boy's name)—although these spellings may not be accurate.

This store was later moved by Reno and Willie and put on a post foundation by the Gnat Creek Bridge, near the Raihala family home. Until the 1950s it was used for storage of fishnets and other items. Before it was demolished, some of the old store fixtures were salvaged and are still in the Raihala home place. These included a cutter for bars of tobacco and a handsome brass scale with a removable scoop. One of the store's big windows was recycled and installed in the daylight basement Reno excavated under the family home in the 1950s and early 1960s.

The Raihalas Build a Home in Brownsmead

It is certain that the Raihalas' plan was always to buy land and build a house. Pampa had been deprived of his share of the Raihala farm in Kalajoki when he was just a toddler. Ganga was expelled from Alajoki, her family home, when she got married. It must have been important to both of them to own land and have a place that belonged to them.

In about 1907, they bought a piece of land they liked in Clatsop County, north of Highway 30, near Gnat Creek. The land included both a flat "bottomland" segment, and a wooded, hilly section with a spring for drinking water and several little streams. It was much like the terrain they had left behind in Finland.

There are two documents that give legal descriptions of Raihala holdings in Brownsmead. They were drawn up by the Astoria Abstract Company and trace the deeds of the land back to the first time it appeared in government records. The language of these old documents, particularly the descriptions of property boundaries, is extremely opaque, but the documents do offer some interesting facts.

The Raihala property was first mentioned in official records as part of a "Patent" dated May 15, 1869, granting 320 acres to John Davis. The patent is signed by President U.S. Grant. A patent is, in essence, a land grant for a homestead.

At one point, the North West Timber Company, incorporated in 1883, had an interest in the land. The wooded nature of the property's hillside section can be inferred from the stated purpose of this company: "To buy, own, sell, lease, and use timber lands and other lands, timber logs and lumber of all kinds and to manufacture lumber of all kinds, shingles and cordwood and dispose of the same."

The Old Home Place

According to Frank "Bub" Frost, Matt and Mary's first home on their property was an old logging camp building which no longer exists. There was also a little house near the end of the present driveway. It is not clear if Pampa and Ganga ever lived in this house, but Ellen and her family did live there for a time. This house is also gone—it burned down around 1928.

In about 1910 Matt and Mary built a big farmhouse to accommodate their growing family. They also included two rooms upstairs that could be rented out to bring in extra income. According to Jon Westerholm, a long-time resident of Brownsmead, the Westerholm family was building a house on adjacent property, just up the Brownsmead Hill. In 1910, they rented at least one room from Pampa and Ganga, and Jon's father, William "Sharkey" Westerholm, was born there.

The old home place was built in Finnish vernacular style and eventually included many farm outbuildings—two barns, a calf house, a milk house, a sauna, and, of course, an outdoor toilet, or privy. The portion around the house and some outbuildings was originally surrounded by a white picket fence.

The view over Gnat Creek from the front porch of the house showed green bottomland and trees as far as the eye could see. The bluish Coast Range Mountains of Oregon formed a backdrop in the distance, and there was a high curtain of tall, dark green trees behind the new house.

If one ignored the distant mountains, the surroundings looked much like the farms in Kalajoki. But some-

thing wasn't quite right. Perhaps it needed some different kinds of trees.

Ganga may have recalled the birch tree she had planted at Alajoki before she left to get married. It had beautiful, light bark, triangular, green leaves, and it stood near the path leading from the farmhouse to the sauna. So she planted several birch trees between her new house and her new free-standing sauna. There was also an apple tree in front of Ganga's old home in Finland, so she got two Gravenstein seedlings and planted them on either side of the path leading to her new front door. Then she added a mountain ash near the house and a wisteria vine to shade the porch.

When these plantings were completed, it is easy to imagine how satisfied Pampa and Ganga felt as they stood on their new front porch, surrounded by their five oldest kids. They finally had a house they had built themselves, exactly the way they wanted, on land of their own.

No one could sell this home out from under them, and no one could tell them they were no longer welcome to live there. They were finally at home in the New World.

Memories of Pampa

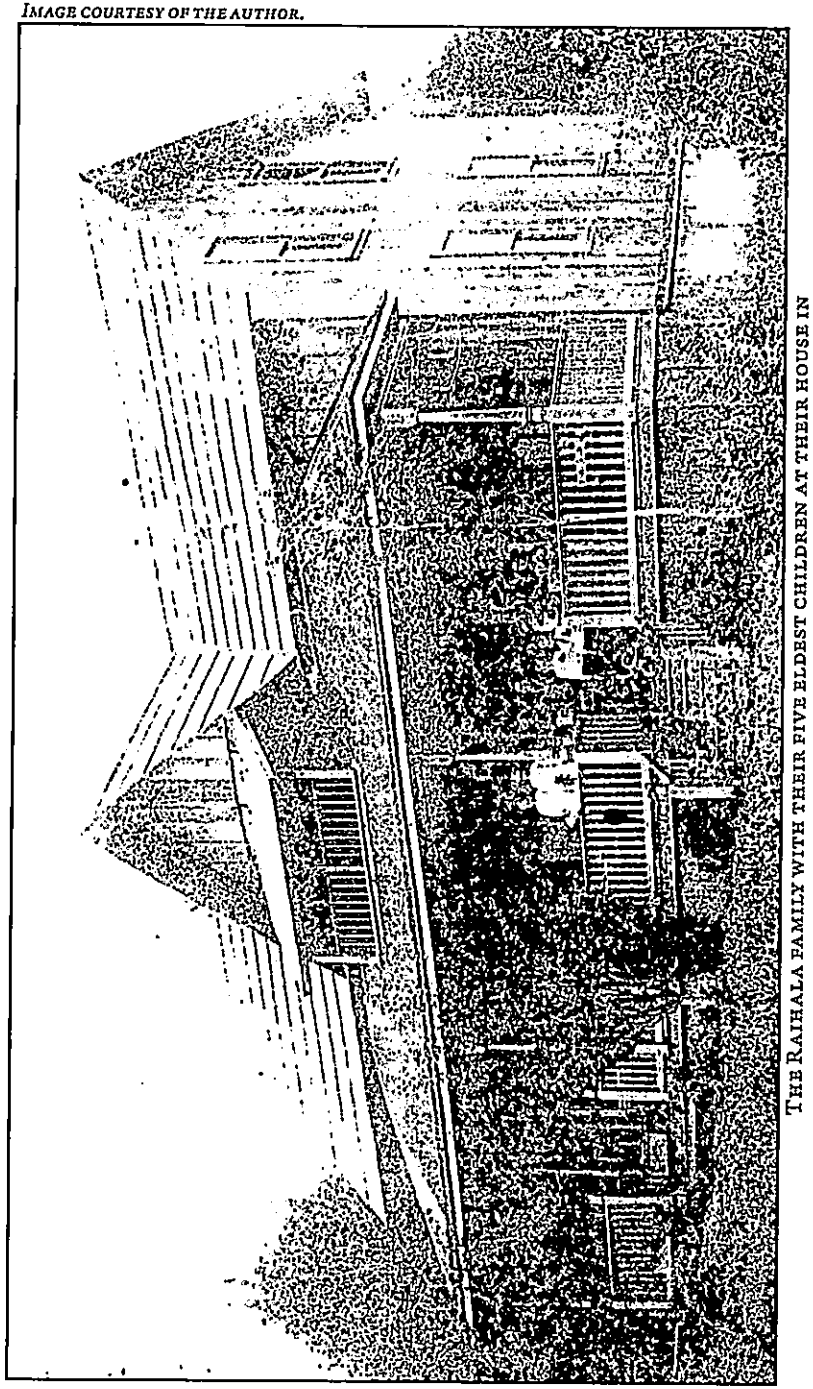
Pampa and Ganga had six children and sixteen grandchildren. Fourteen of these grandchildren are still living as I write and most of us have some memories of Pampa. However, only the oldest grand kids saw much of him. Although Pampa spoke some English, the language barrier loomed large, and some old Finnish ways weren't always fully appreciated by the grandchildren. One of these customs was "going to sauna."

Terry Aarnio, Wilma's youngest child, remembers going to sauna at his grandparents' home, probably before 1950. The free-standing sauna building was located 100 steps away from the main house to reduce the danger of fire. The parents of each nuclear family would go into the sauna, along with their children. Families entered through a dressing room where they hung their clothes. Then they stepped into the large dark sauna room with three benches. The sauna was heated by a wood-fired barrel stove in the left front corner. This stove had a brick chimney going up through the roof, and there were rocks on top the stove that would heat up to provide bursts of steam when water was thrown on them. Terry said the dark sauna room, fiery stove, and steaming hot rocks scared him to death. To a little kid, they looked like a preview of hell.

Russ Dybvik, the eldest child of Sylvia ("Shrimp"), also remembers going to sauna at Pampa's and Ganga's on Saturday nights, but he was a bit older than Terry, so his memories are more benign. After sauna, Pampa would play cribbage with Russ' father, Erling Dybvik.

Russ recalls that Pampa had a string of Finnish swear words to use when driving his small herd of six to eight milk cows from the tideland to the barn. He'd walk along behind them

Image courtesy of the author.



The Raihala family with their five eldest children at their house in Brownsmead, Oregon, which they built about 1910.

in knee-high rubber boots, hitting a switch against his leg, cussing fluently in Finnish all the while.

To feed the cows in winter, Pampa grew hay on the diked tideland. To "make" hay, Pampa would borrow an old Model A flatbed truck from a neighbor, Charlie Leino. Pampa and Erling would pitch hay up onto the truck. Russ would stand atop the growing pile and stomp it down. The truck would then make its precarious way across the bumpy fields to the barn where the hay was forked up into a loft, called the hay mow. Once when the truck hit a particularly big bump, half the hay fell off. This called for super-extreme language, so Pampa started cussing in English! The stream of invective continued until he and Erling had all the hay back on the truck.

Pampa died when I was five, and my personal memory is of a feeble, old man, lying in a bed. His bedroom was off the big farmhouse kitchen in the Raihala house. That room was kept warm by a big wood stove in the kitchen that was used for both heating and cooking. His years of hard living had finally caught up with him, and he died slowly from lung cancer. His granddaughter, Judy Aarnio Branthover, Wilma's eldest child, recalls visiting Pampa and "watching him get smaller and smaller," as the cancer took its toll.

My father, Reno Raihala, Pampa's and Ganga's eldest son, moved into the old home place with our family in 1951 after Pampa died. Ganga moved into a smaller house about a quarter mile down the road. I remember an old Seth Thomas schoolhouse clock that had belonged to Pampa and Ganga, and which stayed in the house. Pampa had allegedly seen this clock in a saloon, probably in Astoria, where he would go to drink and gamble. The clock was broken and its hands were stopped at two o'clock, so Pampa offered the bartender two dollars for it and took it home.

This clock was cleaned and repaired and got us down to the school bus on time for many years. Finally, however, it started "acting up" and my parents took it to a jewelry and clock shop in Astoria to be fixed. We never got it back because the clock maker said he had lost it. This was a big shame, because it was one of the very few genuine heirlooms Pampa and Ganga had left to the family.

Memories of Ganga

My earliest memories of Ganga are of a tiny, small-boned woman with bright eyes like those of a little bird, and white hair pulled back into a bun at the nape of her neck. Her posture was very bent. Reno, my father, said it was because she had a hernia that had never been repaired, and that may have been true, but she may also have suffered from osteoporosis. The rigors of bearing and raising six children in rural surroundings miles from a clinic or hospital had probably depleted her small bones of calcium.

Ganga always tried to communicate with her grandchildren in her broken and accented English. She was also pleased if we tried out our childish Finnish on her. She always had some hard candy to offer, and she made fragrant, white, coarse-textured bread that she served warm and delicious, with butter that melted into rivulets and ran down our chins.

Although her English wasn't fluent, one felt a very keen intelligence behind her sharp eyes. Gordon Clark, who married her daughter, Irene (Ikie), found Ganga's sharp gaze disconcerting. "That woman knows how much change I have in my pockets," he once said.

Ganga was clearly very literate in Finnish. When we visited Ganga's old home in Finland, we found a large folder of photos, notes, and newspaper clippings from America concerning Ganga's children and grand-children. Ganga and her daughters had been sending these back to Ganga's sister, Seliina, over the course of many years. Some articles were even carefully translated from English into Finnish.

Ganga was creative with her hands and was good at "making net" for local gillnet fishermen. This was no small task as the Columbia River gillnet had multiple layers in varying sizes of mesh, arranged into a complex structure which included a back wall and an "apron." The nets floated vertically in the water, moving with the tide, and once a fish became entangled, the net structure made it very difficult for the fish to break free.

Ganga was also an avid gardener and the Raihala farmstead in Brownsmead was replete with growing edibles such as apples, plums, pears, currents, gooseberries, and raspberries. Her flower garden included Oriental poppies, roses, primroses, forget-me-nots, grape hyacinths, weigela, snowball, mock orange, forsythia, and a host of other flowers and shrubs.

Judy Aarnio Branthover remembers that Ganga often sat in the working area of the kitchen, apart from the family, when the Aarnios had supper with Pampa and Ganga. Sari Alajoki has explained that was the custom for the "lady of the house" in Finland when Ganga was young.

Pampa died in 1950 and Ganga in 1967. They are both buried in the Knappa Prairie Cemetery with most of their children around them in the last plot of land they could finally called their own.

Copyright © 2015 by Rea Raihala Christoffersson.

This article has been adapted from Finnish Roots, American Branches. Rea Raihala Christoffersson. (Lake Oswego, OR: Christoffersson Publications, 2015).